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A Reader in General Anthropology

CARLETON S. COON
Professor of Anthropology
Harvard University

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11

The Pygmies of the Ituri Forest

000 ANOTHER example of local specialization and intergroup relations is that of the African pygmies with their Negro hosts, as narrated by Patrick Putnam.* [a]

[a] [Footnote indicated by asterisk (*) appears on P. 322-D.-Author]

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The Forest Environment.

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137 The Ituri forest is rolling country, so densely covered with trees that the relief of the landscape is invisible ex-
132 cept from the air. It is a primary rain forest; that is, in most of the region it rains every day or every other day, averaging about one half of the days, from four to six in the afternoon—some 180 days a year. The annual rainfall is correspondingly great, about one and a half meters. The temperature is about 70° F. at night, and varies during the day from 75° to 80° F., depending upon whether it is sunny or cloudy. During January and February, the "dry" season, there are many overcast days; during the rest of the year it is either actually raining or else sunny, with quick changes. When the rain comes, it comes suddenly. It may be bright during the earlier part of the day, and then in the afternoon cloud up all at once in thunderheads. For a few minutes high winds rage through the trees, which tremble like grass in a breeze. Rotten branches and even huge trees crack and fall, crash-

132 ing to the ground. The lightning flashes from the somber sky, and thunder rolls and re-echoes, followed by a pelting downpour. Then in an hour or two it will suddenly stop, sometimes for a brief period of sunshine before the dark of night.

137 The forest varies greatly in regard to underbrush. In some spots there is no undergrowth at all, and nothing but leaf mold between the boles of the trees; in others there is a wild tangle of bushes, reeds, and lianas. The densest thickets are found in small patches of secondary growth, where the Negroes have made clearings and then abandoned them. Most of the forest, however, is virgin growth, and unimpeded except for fallen tree trunks.

136 The forest provides game enough
137 for the pygmies, and some to spare for their hosts. Many kinds of wild plants, huge trees, small shrubs, small plants, growing low on the forest floor, bear either edible fruits or medicinal leaves or bark. Many edible fungi are abundant.

133 The forest is also well watered; the

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 323-A]

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[128] * Putnam has been living with the people of whom he spoke for nearly two decades. He dictated to me a somewhat longer story of pygmy life, which I have condensed to its present compass. He went over the copy carefully and made corrections. He is not satisfied with it, and has gone back to learn more. Meanwhile he is willing to let you read what follows. This material has never before been published.

[P. 322-D]

133 rolling hills are separated by perennial streams never more than a few miles
[312] apart. A pygmy can find water almost anywhere within a hundred yards.

Negro-pygmy Relations

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This forest is inhabited by two kinds of people, Negroes and pygmies, who maintain an almost symbiotic relationship, based on trade. A Negro village may own approximately 100 square miles of forest territory. In this territory are the Negro village and the pygmy village. The former is permanent, in a clearing; the latter is temporary, under the forest trees. In maintaining their relationship, it is the pygmies' job to take in honey and meat, while the Negroes' obligation is to give them plantains. In addition, the pygmies may bring in a certain amount of wild baselli fruit in season, or roofing leaves, or rattan and fibers for net making; in return they may acquire ax blades, knives, and arrowheads from the Negroes.

There is no strict process of barter involved, and no accounting kept, other than through general observation. If the pygmies are stingy, their Negroes will hold back their bananas. If the Negroes are stingy, the pygmies will leave the territory and go to live with other pygmies serving other Negro hosts.

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This relationship is interfamilial, between a pygmy family and a Negro family. It is a matter of close personal relations, inherited, on both sides, from father to son. These alliances may change from time to time, but when they do there are usually hard feelings; if a man's pygmy leaves him to serve another host it is a kind of divorce. In the old days, a frequent cause of intervillage warfare among the Negroes was the luring away of each other's pygmies.

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177 439 648 Before the Belgians stopped inter-village and intertribal warfare, the most important single duty of the pygmy was to act as scout and intelligence agent in the forest. As soon as he became aware of a raiding party crossing the boundary of his host's territory he would hotfoot it to the village to give warning. This eternal vigilance on the part of the pygmy was probably of more value to his hosts than the meat that he brought in. Now that the need of this has ceased he is fulfilling only half of his contract; the Negro, who still provides plantains and manufactured objects, is still fulfilling all of his. Still both are satisfied.

177 439 361 621 648 Ordinarily, the pygmy keeps inside the territory of his Negro hosts. Individuals and small family groups may go outside to visit relatives in other bands, but this causes no disturbance because the visitors turn in their game to the hosts of the kinsmen whom they are visiting. This constant milling about evens up on the whole, and the number of pygmies in any band at any one time is about the same. There are occasions, however, when the hunters of a band may have a strong reason to pass beyond the landmarks which designate their hosts' territorial boundaries. If there is a lot of game just over the border and no pygmies there to catch it, the pygmies will tell their Negroes, who tell the Negroes owning that part of the forest. An agreement will be made between the two groups of Negroes, and the pygmies will be allowed to take the game, provided that they pay a part of it to the owners of the forest, and another part to their own hosts. This kind of economic treaty, therefore, brings the pygmies of a given band into contact with two groups of Negroes, and may initiate new relationships.

177 514 When the pygmy camp is close to the Negro village, some of the pygmies

177 may come in every evening. They will
514 leave a couple of old men to stay be-
[206] hind in the camp as guards, smoking hashish, and the rest will go into the village, usually around four o'clock in the afternoon, after the day's hunting is over. From then until dark a few pygmies are usually to be seen hanging about the women's quarters. If a white man arrives, however, they quickly disappear, through fear that he will confiscate their antelope, or any other game that they may have brought with them.

[207] These mass visits are made particularly if it is going to be a moonlit night, and if wine drinking is going on. If there is a moon they will stay and
[535] dance; if not, they will come home at dark. The Negroes give them wine in a condescending way, and the pygmies put on what the Negroes consider to be wild, barbaric dances.

439 Sometimes the pygmy camp is as
[361] much as two days' journey from the village. In this case, the pygmies go in seldom, and browbeat their wives to make them go in to get plantains.

A visitor to a Negro village can nearly always see bunches of plantains lying around on the ground; they have been placed there for the pygmies, who pick them up and carry them home. There is no need for any special bargaining or designation; the pygmies know which bunches are for them.

177 **Pygmy attitudes toward their Ne-**
439 **groes.**—The pygmies consider them-
571 selves inseparably attached to their hosts and think it their duty to provide them with meat. Although they feel that they are supposed to turn over all honey and elephant meat, in each case they eat all they can before taking it
[251] into the village. They never preserve or store any food. Their duty of feeding the Negroes meat is therefore regarded as somewhat of a nuisance. On the other hand, when the pygmy

P 177 439 571 [426] wants something from a Negro, he wheedles and "begs" for it. He may thus "borrow" a mortar, a skin-headed drum for dancing, etc., and will not return it until the Negro comes after it or sends for it. He will not put any of these things under cover, or care for them; he leaves them out in the rain to mildew and rot. The owner has to see that his property is cared for, and this forms a subject on which the Negro can make fun of the pygmy.

The form of this relationship is therefore a grudging duty in the case of giving, and a wheedling begging in the case of receiving. These outer forms fail to reveal the inner feeling of loyalty and affection between the parties concerned, but rather symbolize the existing situation in which the Negro is at the top of the scale and the pygmy at the bottom.

Z 186 **Negro attitude toward their pygmies.**—The Negroes distinguish four ranks or orders of living beings: people, pygmies, chimpanzees, and other animals. The pygmies are thus considered a species apart, neither human nor animal, but in between. The main point of distinction lies not in their size or physique, but in the fact that the pygmies do no cultivation.

Z 186 563 581 P 581 The Negroes think of their pygmies as barbaric and uncultured, but at the same time they are often fond of them. A Negro may occasionally marry a pygmy woman, and the children are considered real children, complete human beings; they are brought up with the Negro's other children. The Negroes say that pygmy women are good in bed, cheap, and prolific, but that they are useless for women's work—cultivation and cooking. For a pygmy woman it is a great rise in the scale of living to marry a Negro as his second or third wife, despite the fact that pygmy wives are usually the butt of humor from the Negro wives. This is, how-

Z [515] [522]

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ever, a one-way process; no Negress could endure the pygmy way of living, and none of them ever marry pygmies.

The interplay between Negroes and pygmies may be illustrated by a number of examples in which they disagree on historical facts. The Negroes say that the pygmies once went naked, like animals. The pygmies hotly deny this, and assert that they always wore loin cloths. The Negroes admit that they themselves were once cannibals, but say that the pygmies ate more human flesh than they did. This too the pygmies deny; they claim that they never ate human flesh except when the Negroes gave it to them.

. . . .

Z 563 881 P 177 881

In addition to the exchange of food and, formerly, protection, which form the basis for Negro-pygmy interaction, there is another activity which helps to cement their relationship. The Negroes have a circumcision school, of the usual Negro variety. This school is held about once in four or five years. There is no specific interval; it is probable that they wait until there are enough boys ready to form a class of the right size. These boys are anywhere from nine to fourteen years of age. Now the pygmies associated with these Negroes may send their boys through this same school with the sons of their hosts. Thus, the pygmy boys are away from home several months, are in close association with the Negro boys, and are taught the same secrets that the Negro boys learn. At the end they are all circumcised together, and their parents come to the Negro village to dance and get drunk with the parents of the Negro boys.

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The pygmies are thus age-graded like the Negroes. Each class has its own cheer, or song, as in American colleges. Each class also has its own name, such as "Hurricane" or "great army worm," depending on some event

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which occurred during its period of isolation. This not only forms a strong bond between the pygmies and their hosts but it gives them a formal sequence of age grades in their own society. There are no special scarifications or other insignia for each class; it is a common experience to hear one person asking another, when strangers meet, "What class were you in? I am a Hurricane," and so forth, just like Harvard alumni asking each other what class they were in, and whom they knew, over a drink.

Pygmy Locomotion

The pygmies are very expert at getting about through the forest, and especially at moving swiftly through the thick undergrowth that a white man would have to chop down with a machete before he could enter. To a Negro, a white man trying to get through seems clumsy. To a pygmy a Negro seems clumsy. Schebesta observes that the small size of the pygmies makes them better adapted to locomotion in the forest than the larger Negroes and whites.[1]

The pygmies jump over fallen logs, and make their way using hands and feet—hands to toss dead branches and trunks aside. They can actually run through this tangle, and while so doing they sometimes pick up fallen logs and throw them so they will crash at a distance, to mislead pursuers, or game which they are stalking.

They are also very expert at climbing; the children practice this from babyhood. Their technique is far from simian, but a widely distributed method, similar in principle to that of a lumberjack. The climber cuts two

[1] Schebesta, P., *Revisiting My Pygmy Hosts*. London: Hutchinson & Co., 1936, pp. 78-79.

[P. 325-B]

481 lengths of 20 feet or so each from some flexible liana, and passes the first around the tree trunk, which may be as much as six feet thick. Then he sets the second liana in place in the same manner, and passes the two under his shoulders. He sits parallel to the trunk, which he faces, and grips with his feet. While bracing against one liana, he moves the other upward, then braces on it while moving the other. In this way he can climb up the slick, limbless bole of the tree, to where the first limbs branch off, some hundred or more feet above the ground.

When he reaches the first branches, he takes off his lianas and walks along the limbs like a tightrope walker or structural steel worker, free of the limbs, with nothing to hold in his hands. When he has accomplished his mission he comes down again the way he went up.

Pygmy Technology

412 **Basic tools.**—The keynote to the
197 simple and specialized pygmy tech-
439 nology is the fact that they do not have to make any of their basic tools, but instead obtain effective iron cutting tools from their Negro hosts. This eliminates much work and the need for much skill in toolmaking, and provides them with more efficient instruments than they could possibly make for themselves at a food-gathering level of technology.

When a pygmy needs an ax he will beg one from his Negro host. Perhaps the Negro will give him a whole ax, haft and all. The blade is a triangular piece of iron, made locally by Negro smiths, and set in a solid wooden handle, adzed out of a larger piece of wood. The handle has a hole which has been burned through it from side to side with a hot iron. Through this

412 hole goes the narrow end of the ax.
[177] This is essentially a Neolithic type of
[439] hafting.

Perhaps the Negro will give him
[313] only the ax head, without a haft. In this case the pygmy will cut down a thin sapling, or a tree branch, just the right thickness, and use it bark and
[284] all. He splits this with his knife, at one end. Then he wraps the split and the blade which he has thrust through it with twine or rattan. The pygmy will use the Negro-hafted ax on the ground, but if he is climbing a tree and needs an ax while up there, he will take along one of his own hafting by preference, because it is lighter.

Both men and women use these axes. The women also have knives of their own, of the same manufacture. These knives are about six inches long, leaf-bladed, double edged. The handle is simply a thick tang, twisted, and thus is all one piece with the blade. In some cases, however, small wooden handles
[462] are added. The women use these for many purposes—for peeling bananas, and preparing other foods for cooking; to cut monocotyledonous leaves for roofing, and to split the stem. In general, it is the all-purpose woman's tool.

412 The man's knife is larger and single
177 edged, a kind of small machete, made
439 in Germany. The Negroes obtain them from white men by trade and give them to the pygmies. I once tried giving them American machetes, of the kind prized in Central America, but they were too large and too heavy.
412 The men use these machetes for cutting
[313] lianas, tree limbs, and so forth. For
[322] small woodwork, however, such as whittling an arrow shaft, they are more likely to use an arrowhead or spearhead, which is nearer the right size.

Axes and the two kinds of knives and arrowheads and spearheads are the only cutting tools the pygmies have or know how to use.

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415 177 439 Also obtained from the Negroes are the cooking pots that all pygmy women own, essential for water storage and cooking. These pots are made by Negro women, and by relatively few Negro women at that; pottery making is a specialist occupation.

372 **Fire.**—The pygmies do not know how to make fire, nor do many of the Negroes with whom they are associated. Throughout all this countryside people keep fires going, and when one fire dies out the people will borrow it from each other. While on the march the pygmies carry glowing embers with them; they can keep a brand lighted for ten miles during a rainstorm. They do this by wrapping the burning ends in green leaves, and swinging it up and down; every two or three minutes they uncover it a bit and blow on it. At night these brands serve as torches. The Negroes have special wood which they use for torches but the pygmies do not. Their firewood is always fallen wood, and therefore always somewhat rotten and punky.

342 462 [824] **Houses.**—When the pygmies have chosen a new camp, the women go out into the forest a little way to collect building materials. Each woman brings in a bundle of sticks about half an inch thick, and from three to six feet in length; she also brings a bundle of sarcophrynium leaves. She thrusts the ends of the sticks in the ground around in a circle about five feet in diameter. Then she gets inside the circle, and bends opposite pairs of sticks inward, and ties them together. She does this in the following manner: first she takes a stick in each hand, then she brings them together, then she holds the two with one hand, and wraps with the other.

342 462 476 This technique is not easy; it is much easier if two women work together, and in practice this is usually the case. The first woman, who is to

342 462 476 live in the house, will hold the two sticks in her hands, and the second woman, with both hands free, will do the wrapping and tying. After they set up the first woman's house they will go to work on the second woman's. Once they have tied the uprights into a dome, they weave in horizontal pieces in the form of hoops, to complete the frame, leaving an opening as doorway.

Then the women take the sarcophrynium leaves which they have collected, and nick the stems with their knives. These leaves have no midribs; they are palmate like grape leaves. They slip the notch in each stem over a place on a cross hoop, and soon have the whole house completely shingled; this roof will be watertight in the rain, and will last in all likelihood as long as they need the house, which is only from two [46] to three months. The whole house-building operation takes only two hours.

482 283 285 **Basketry and cordage.**—Each pygmy woman has a basket which she carries on her back when out collecting or when shifting camp. They plait these baskets themselves out of rattan and other fibers. The woman carries the basket on her back by means of a fiber tump line over her forehead. She will use a similar tump line to bring home her family's ration of plantains from the Negro village. There is a good reason for the use of the tump line here; in the forest it would be impossible to carry a head load very far without its being knocked off by a limb. The forest Negroes also use tump lines and back loads.

224 433 ## Pygmy Economic Activities

Hunting is the principal occupation of the pygmies; it is their principal reason for being able to maintain their relationship with their Negro hosts.

[P. 327-B]

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433 Although between themselves the pygmies have little division of labor, in another sense they are all specialists in hunting, and the division of labor is between them and the Negroes. In this sense the pygmies form an ethnic caste, a genetically and occupationally segregated segment of a larger economic entity.

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[481] This does not mean that the Negro does no hunting. However, the pygmy spends all of his time hunting, the Negro only a portion of his. The pygmy depends largely on his ability to move noiselessly and swiftly about the forest, and to climb trees. The Negro depends on his greater patience and mechanical ingenuity, for he hunts largely by means of elaborate traps, deadfalls, pits, weighted spears dangled over elephant paths, and other deadly devices. The pygmy could never be induced to dig a pit; it is too much work, takes too long, and takes too much concentration and persistence. Nor do they ever use traps.

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[101] Throughout the pygmy country, the pygmies can be classified either as net hunters or non-net hunters, depending on whether they habitually practice big community hunts, driving animals into nets, or depend entirely on individual stalking as a means of securing game. They may also be classified by whether or not they use bows and arrows. In both net hunting and the use of the bow and arrow, the pygmies follow the lead of the Negroes among whom they live. Where the Negroes have nets, the pygmies have nets; where the Negroes have bows, the pygmies have bows. This is easily understood, since the Negroes make both the nets and the arrowheads. Presumably, the bowless pygmies are net hunters, for otherwise they could not live.

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[621] Whether the pygmies in a group are net hunters or bowmen or both makes a considerable difference in the rest of

[P. 328-A]

224 621 their activities and in their social organization in particular, since the degree to which cooperation is required in hunting, and the numbers of people involved, are the principal factors in determining the composition of the band.

224 **Net hunting.**—The technique of net hunting can best be described by going through the chronological events of a single day. The details of where and how to hunt are decided during the usual evening conversation period the night before. The chief argument lies in the weather; if it is going to be dry it will be better for net hunting. Since it will sometimes rain for three days, then go two days without rain, it is a matter of some speculation and prediction whether or not it will rain on a given afternoon. In general the weather permits net hunting, for it usually does not begin to rain until 4:00 P.M., and by that time the pygmies often have enough game to make the day's work profitable. The season is also important, for during the dry season the fallen leaves crackling underfoot make such a noise that stalking is hard even for a tracker so expert as the pygmy. However, this condition is good for net hunting, since it is necessary that the game hear the hunters.

224 283 286 [482] [854] The men, women, and children start out early in the morning, and the women carry their babies on their backs. The men carry the nets. These are made of cordage, about the same width as tennis nets, but a little longer. Since the length of the net is functional in the hunting, the pygmies keep it fairly constant. As one end rots away they add onto the other end, until an old net may eventually be largely replaced by these additions. However, [177] [439] the pygmies prefer new nets made by the Negroes and, furthermore, there are rarely enough nets to go around. Hence they frequently beg their hosts for more.

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224 When they have arrived at the right location, the men set up the nets in a line and stand by to tend them; the women spread out in a circle to beat. Often the pygmies will have dogs which they have borrowed from the Negroes, barkless dogs with wooden bells tied to their collars. Each woman cuts a lot of twigs and makes a little broom with them. She beats the bushes with it, and cries out, "Whoo, whoo, whoo, whoo!" over and over again. The young children, except for the babies which are being carried, are made to keep out of this.

[198] [825] When the women sight an animal and it heads for the nets, they change the tone of their baying; either they identify the kind of animal by this means or indicate that an animal in general is coming. When the animal rushes up to the net and entangles itself, the man who is tending that part of the net grabs the animal and kills it with his knife or spear. He will then beat his hand on his arm pit, and the others will come up to see what he has killed. Sometimes, however, the animal sees the net, or a man moves, and the animal leaps back into the line of women. Such an animal can well escape, for the women are not prepared to stop it. However, when a woman engaged in beating sights a slow animal, such as a turtle, pangolin, porcupine, or even a rat, she will dive for it and pop it into her basket which she carries on her back, and go on beating. [462] This is merely incidental gathering; slow animals are women's game.

During the course of a single day a pygmy band may set up their nets, conduct a drive, take the nets down, and repeat the process as many as seven times, each time in a different place. If the clouds collect early, they will go home. If there are no clouds and they have a good bag of game, they will still go home, but if it is dry and they

224 have little game they will keep on until nearly dark.

There is a difference in value between net positions in a net hunt. The central position is best because it catches the most animals, and the flanks are the worst. The pygmies have a whole vocabulary to express the details of net hunting, including a whole group of verbs for net setting in various positions. There seems to be some rule about who sets his nets in which spot, but this has not been recorded.

[192] [193]

If a big animal, like a buffalo, comes toward the nets, the men will try to get them down and let him rush through, for they do not want to foul and tear the nets or to encounter the dangerous animal. If the large animal does strike the net, however, it may delay him long enough for the nearest man to rush up and spear him.

Most of the animals they catch are no larger than a dog or goat; for example, a kuchinda is about that size. The hunter cuts its throat and carries it around his neck, with hind and front legs on opposite sides. The average day's bag is about half of an animal of this size per man. If they have caught an okapi, however, the hunter cuts it up on the spot, and they cut small lianas to tie up the pieces with. The women also will carry some of it in their baskets. Almost always the meat goes directly to the camp after a hunt, where it is divided. Only after this will the share of the Negroes be carried to their village.

[481] **Bow and arrow hunting.**—In bow and arrow hunting, the pygmy relies not on his endurance but on his ability to move through the forest silently; that is his greatest skill and greatest asset. He can track an antelope to a thicket where it has lain down to sleep, and shoot it from five yards' distance before it wakes up. He shoots machine-gun style; he will pump five ar-

[P. 329-B]

224 rows in rapid sequence in the antelope's direction, and probably but one will hit him. The pygmy can do just as well by leaping on the animal barehanded, and either strangle it or kill it with a knife, and he often does this.

224 411 In his quiver the pygmy usually carries two kinds of arrows, the first with iron tips, which he generally uses on the larger, antelope-size, animals, and wooden-tipped ones which are poisoned, and which he uses for monkeys. He rarely shoots a monkey with an iron-tipped arrow, through fear of losing it. Each man makes his own poison as well as his own darts. The [824] plants from which the poison is made are well known, and there is neither [137] ritual nor mystery attached to the process. The vital plant is a strophanthus; they will mix other plants with it, but they know which one does the trick.

The strophanthus poison is a heart stimulant. Its action is not immediate. The monkey runs along a bit, grows weaker, and urinates. The pygmies watch for this, for the moment of 224 urinating is the fatal one. If the monkey is out on a limb where there are no other branches, he will fall off; if he is within reach of a lateral branch or one rising upward, he will clutch it, and the hunter will be obliged to climb the tree if he wants the monkey. To do this he uses the technique described under pygmy locomotion. Since the monkeys are usually high in the trees and the pygmies are such poor marksmen, they undoubtedly miss more of them than they hit.

Elephant hunting.—Pygmy elephant hunting involves a technique that is wholly different from either of the above two. The pygmy elephant hunter is a specialist; not every pygmy has the courage to face an elephant and kill it, and not every man the skill. Whether or not pygmies ever killed elephants [177] in the early days, the present form of

[P. 330-A]

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224 elephant hunting is a recent development, the historical growth of which
[178] can be easily traced. It is also an important reason for Negro-pygmy relations.

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224 The chief reason why the Negro hunts is to kill elephants. The elephants barge about in great herds, destroying the plantations which represent a great deal of labor in clearing the forest and planting the bananas, and which form the Negroes' whole capital, his whole means of livelihood. The elephants burst in, pushing down fences, eating some of the bananas by the bunch and trampling the rest. This dread calamity usually happens on moonless nights when it would be almost certain death to go out and attack the elephants. All the Negro can do is to let the elephants do their worst, and try to kill them later to prevent recurrence.

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237 In the old days, when the Negroes had killed an elephant they did not
439 know what to do with the tusks, other
435 than make bark-cloth beaters from a few, and a number of other minor uses.
177 The majority of the tusks were therefore stuck up around the Negroes' clearings as fences. Now when the Arab traders began coming in from Zanzibar, they were interested in commodities which were nonperishable and of concentrated value, and ivory filled these specifications best of all local goods. At first the Arabs bought the ivory from the Negroes for very low prices, since the Negroes were ignorant of its worth. Then when the Negroes began raising the prices to equally ridiculous heights, the Arabs raided them and seized it, and the Negroes began hiding it. Ivory is heavy, and the Arabs had to find bearers to carry it

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[567] out to the coast. Hence they seized men and women and made them carry it, and when they arrived at the coast they sold their bearers as slaves, mak-

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237 ing a double profit. Slavery, therefore,
439 was a by-product of these raids, and
435 not the primary objective, which was
177 to obtain ivory. When the white men
[567] came in, they said to the Negroes,
"Why deal with these Arab slavers?
Sell your ivory to us, and we will leave
you alone." Thus, ivory became an
important item to the Negroes, and
the more they could get of it the better.

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224 The pygmy could never, by himself,
177 kill enough elephants to stop them from
437 trampling his host's gardens. He
Z could, however, kill enough to swell
439 his host's supply of ivory and increase
563 his host's capital. So a pygmy who
was an elephant hunter became a special
favorite of his Negro host and would
get special gifts and favors in return
for the ivory.

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411 The pygmy elephant hunter uses a
special spear. Its handle is three to
four feet long; its blade is leaf-shaped,
Z of thin iron, about eight inches long
[325] and four wide. It is Negro-forged, of
soft iron; the pygmy hunter sharpens
it on a stone, until it is razor sharp.

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224 His technique of hunting is daring
and simple, and takes as much skill as
that of a Spanish matador. He tracks
the elephant, which is not difficult, un-
til he knows from the spoor that he is
close to it. When he hears the ele-
phant's bowels rumble, he goes along
even more quietly, until he sees the
elephant through the underbrush. He
then approaches the elephant silently,
up wind; he jabs his spear as far as he
can into the elephant, gashing the belly
just behind the ribs; then he pulls it
right out again. The elephant at this
point usually turns, and the pygmies
say that if you as much as wink at this
moment you are a dead pygmy.

The man stands stock still, so the
elephant can't see him. Then he goes
through a sequence of stab and jump
and stand still, as many times as he
can. Every time the elephant looks

224 away he stabs him, and every time the elephant turns he stands still. The elephant can run faster than a man, and the pygmy's only hope is to wound the animal so badly that it will be unable to catch him before he gets away.

Finally the elephant goes charging off with one or more wounds in his intestines. The hunter, with his spear in his hand, returns to the camp. Perhaps the other men will be there, but they may be out net hunting. In the latter case he waits until they have all assembled, and as soon as they are together he tells them his story. There is much excitement; men, women, and children crowd around him and inspect the spear. They may say, "Hmmm, only that much of the tip is bloody, probably he won't die. Let it go." But if the spear is bloody way down to such and such a point, then the elephant has a serious wound and they will follow him.

[484] In the latter case the whole camp goes together. The women load on their babies and cooking pots, and their bunches of plantains. The men take their weapons, and they leave only an old man or two to watch the camp while they are away. They will follow the elephant two or three days, until he finally lies down and dies of peritonitis. Sometimes he has been dead for some time when they reach him, and he may be blown up like a balloon and rotten. Still they will eat him, for rotten meat, if thoroughly boiled, is edible.

224 996 When a group of pygmies reaches a blown-up elephant, a special ceremony takes place. A man other than the elephant hunter cuts a square of skin off the elephant's side. He cuts this up and puts pieces into the mouths of everyone. Then he cuts another layer, and passes this around, and another layer, until he comes down to a point where the body wall is very thin, and

[P. 331-B]

224
796 everyone has had a taste of the raw skin.

Then a small male child, squalling and screaming, is thrust on the elephant's side; he is told to bite, which he does, and the balloon bursts.

This ceremony is repugnant to the pygmies, as they do not like raw meat; it is especially repugnant to the child, who does not enjoy having the whole rotten insides of the elephant burst in his face.

[611] The child is the youngest son of the man who killed the elephant. If the man has no suitable son, it may be his nephew; or, if he has several young sons and the youngest is too small, either to understand the order or to bite, it will be the next older son.

224 Now that the elephant has burst, the ceremony is over, and a free-for-all takes place; the men cut the sides open, pull out the entrails, and climb inside to hack away at the meat. Other men rush to the head and chop away the tusks. The women take the pieces of meat which their men hand to them, and boil them. As soon as they have cooked one chunk, they will start to

[251] boil another. Everyone eats as much of the boiled meat as he is able, and they spread out the rest on drying racks; when it has dried they will take it into the village to the Negroes, who keep it and eat it gradually, for the combination of boiling and drying serves as a means of preserving it, the only food preservation the pygmies practice, and then not for themselves. The tusks go to the special patron of the elephant hunter, and the patron sells them to the Greek or Hindu trader; the patron gives the pygmy a small share of what he receives.

Division of meat.—The need of giving some of the meat to their Negro hosts, and the knowledge that no one will starve as long as they can get bananas, makes the problem of meat di-

[P. 332-A]

224 vision among the pygmies different than among food-gatherers who have a more direct and immediate dependence [594] on hunting. The principles which the pygmies follow are: (1) The biological family is the least common denominator, the basic unit in sharing. No man would think of eating his meat without giving some to his wife and chil- [596] dren. (2) The next unit in sharing is the family group. Any man who has acquired meat will share some of it with other biological families within his family group, but all the shares may not be equal or equivalent. (3) Each man who participates in a hunt is given a share commensurate with his degree of participation. Thus if men from several family groups combine in a hunt, the meat goes to them, and they share their portions within their family groups by single unit families.

For practical purposes, the chief distinction is between meat acquired by stalking and that acquired by net hunting. In the case of stalking, only one man, or more often two or three, will be involved, and these men may well belong to the same family group. With net hunting, however, the whole camp joins the hunt and the whole camp shares the bag.

When an animal is caught net hunting, a number of people have special rights. The man who owns a hunting dog which chased the animal gets the neck. Other special pieces go to the man in whose net it was caught. However, someone else may have borrowed the net and been tending it at the time, and the net tender thus gets a special piece. Then there are pieces for the men whose women bayed it in, and every degree of participation in the killing is recognized and suitably rewarded.

If they bring in five or six antelope there is enough meat for everyone to eat well that night. One family may

224 get one cut of one animal, another cut of another, depending on what part they played in the capture of each. In any case, even if there is only one animal, everyone will get something to eat. This does not mean that all families eat equally well, however; some have more than others, some better cuts. There is both a reward for special luck and prowess, and a charitable mechanism for those who have shown neither. Sometimes the net hunters catch an okapi; in this case there is enough meat to feed the camp for a week, and everyone eats and eats well.

The meat is cut up by the man who killed the animal, or anyone who knows the rules. In any case there are always arguments. The man who makes a [626] mistake is cried down; they all know [591] the rules, or think that they know them. Government, as far as distribution of spoils is concerned, is by argument and common consent without specific leadership in any individual—the typical pygmy way of making decisions and ordering events.

In the case of the hunter who catches his animal all alone, without help of any kind, the carcass belongs to him alone. Theoretically, he and his family could [626] eat it all up if he wished, but there is little chance that this would happen; he would not dare face public opinion. He would be labeled a mean man and [439] would suffer for it in the end. It may happen however that he is behind in his gifts to his Negro host. In this case he will take the carcass uncut into the village, to avoid trouble from that quarter, and the other pygmies will not hold this against him, provided that there is other food to eat.

[171] The division of spoils after an elephant hunt follows the same principle as it does among the Indians of Tierra del Fuego or Lower California when a whale washes ashore—regardless of who may be responsible there is a

[P 333-A]

224 mountain of meat and a free lunch for
171 all as long as it remains edible.

222 **Gathering.**—The gathering of fruits, nuts, and slow animals has a minor importance during most of the year, for the bulk of the pygmies' vegetable food derives from the crops of their Negroes. However, after the evening meal, while the men sit about the fires chatting, the women gather firewood and bring in, just before dusk, any mushrooms and slow game that they may encounter.

[221] The dry season, in January and February, is the time of the ripening of certain fruits and seeds. At this time of the year the pygmies easily could live on the fruit borne by the wild forest trees. It is a period of seasonal abundance and feasting. The [137] ibambi, a big luscious fruit that looks like a pineapple, is one of the most important of these fruits. It drops to the ground with a thud, and pygmies and chimpanzees alike will rush up when [825] they hear it strike. The pygmies often tell stories of chimpanzees that get so full of ibambi that they can eat no more, but hide one in a crotch of a tree for future use; a pygmy sees this and steals it, and the chimpanzee gets a grudge against the pygmy and decides to annoy him in the future.

[137] Next to the ibambi fruit in importance is the baselli nut. This is covered by a tough fibrous husk which can be opened only with a machete; hence, the chimpanzees do not rival the pygmies in this case.

Other gathered foods include termites, which come when the first heavy rains begin after the dry period; colonial caterpillars, which have a later season; and honey.

Pygmy Interaction

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157 **Evening talking time.**—The pygmies seem to be a little less talkative
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[P.333-B]

than the Negroes, who are, in turn, more talkative than whites. In this regard—amount of interaction expressed in speech—the pygmies are about on a level with white men. There is little chance for extensive conversations during the daytime while out hunting, and hence the talking time is during the evening, when they have come home and are sitting in front of their huts, provided that they are not dancing.

At this talking time, each family sits around the entrance of its hut, using short butts of logs as seats. Dusk falls. They talk to each other across the circle, from hut to hut. Everyone can hear everyone else, so it is group interaction, even when one person is addressing one other specifically.

Their subjects of conversation are simple; they discuss what they have been doing that day, and in some cases they talk a little about what they plan to do tomorrow. Every now and then someone makes a joke about how a certain man was clumsy at handling his net during the day's hunt. Some people are quiet, others are noisier. Some men are clowns, habitually cracking jokes at the expense of others.

After bed time comes and the various families crawl into their huts to sleep, they get little uninterrupted rest, as they will keep chattering well into the night. Many of them will get up in the night, make water and have a smoke, and chat with others doing the same. There is almost always someone up, someone talking.

Dancing.—The pygmies will dance almost any night when the weather is clear, and if there is a full moon they will dance most of the night. Sometimes they jump on the ground, or on a hollow log, but when they can beg or borrow a drum from the Negroes, they will beat on that.

[P. 334-A]

62 571 561 [888] **Government.**—There are no chiefs, councils, or any other formal governing bodies in a pygmy camp. In making any decisions concerning the whole camp, two factors are involved. The first of these is respect for older people.

561 571 576 888 [626] A pygmy will always, in addressing a man of an older age group in any formal situation, call him "senior"; he will listen respectfully to an older man and will always obey any reasonable orders he may give. If a younger man shows disrespect, the other members of the camp will gang up on him and berate him. This respect for age, and for the opinions of wise old men, is the basis of pygmy government.

623 571 561 [888] Secondly, while the opinions of most of the old men are respected, every man in the camp is entitled to state his own views on any subject. Thus, during the evening talking time, the pygmies will discuss whether to move camp, where to move it, and why; or whether to go net hunting, and where to hunt. The discussion has no leader and may go on for several evenings. Finally the men who are shouting out different opinions will come to an agreement and the decision will be acted upon.

623 571 561 888 [828] [562] In general it is the older and more experienced men who make the decision, but as some of the old men are considered eccentrics and freaks, little attention is paid to them. Rather, it is an oligarchy of the more respected among the old men, a body with no formal membership or specific composition. In their decisions the pungent remarks of the women also have a considerable influence.

594 ## Pygmy Social Organization

Families and their extensions.—The smallest normal social unit in a pygmy camp is the individual biological [P. 334-B].

594 family; that is, a man, his wife, and their children, if any. This group will occupy one hut together, and its personnel is normally fairly stable.

596 614 602 Each biological family belongs to a larger family group or extended family. All the families within a family group are closely related to each other through the male line. That is, each family group will consist of one or more closely related old men, and his or their male descendants and their [561] families. It is these old men, from all the family groups in a camp, who together form the "ruling" age grade.

621 614 Ideally, a pygmy camp consists of a number of these family groups descended through the male line from a common ancestor, for whom they are named. Therefore, the basic pygmy camp is thus a classic gens, or, in looser terminology, a patrilineal clan.

582 594 596 614 621 The families and family groups are strictly exogamic, and the clan is also exogamic if all members live in the same camp. If, however, it is scattered, the exogamy is not too strictly enforced, although a pygmy will never marry anyone to whom he knows himself to be related, on either side.

614 621 **The pygmy camp.**—Although this is the formal, ideal situation, the composition of the camp is complicated by the presence of visitors from other camps who belong to different clans and can be married. So it can be seen that the clan and the camp are not, in practice, synonymous.

621 Pygmy camps are not all the same size; there is a minimum and a maximum number of people who can live together as a cohabitive group, owing to their needs of hunting, and so forth. Fifty huts is about the limit, with from twenty to forty the optimum, and twenty-five the average. Each hut [592] contains one man, his wife, or wives, [162] and a few children, so that one hundred and fifty might be an average number

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162 of pygmies, of both sexes and all ages, to a camp, with from twenty to forty active adult males.

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361 **Moving camp.**—The pygmies live in any given camp for a month or two at a time. By that time they will have frightened most of the game out of the immediate neighborhood, so that they have to walk a long way to hunt and a long way back. Furthermore, since [514] they relieve themselves at only a short distance from their huts, the whole camp will have become extremely malodorous by that time and uncomfortable even by pygmy standards, and a shift is doubly necessary.

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361 When they have decided where to move, the women pack their carrying baskets with their pots and axes, and a small supply of ficus bark for the men to beat into cloth at their leisure. [487] Whatever they own they will pile on their backs, along with their babies, the babies often mounting the rest of the load. The men will take only their weapons—their bows and arrows and elephant spears.

Once the women are loaded they will start out, and reach the new area at about noon. They begin wandering about looking for a good spot—a place near water where there is supposed to be game, and fruit. Game is the first consideration, then fruit, but a *sine qua non* is to be about fifty yards from drinking water. The next consideration is to have the camp on a moderate slope so it will not become a quagmire when it rains. Another consideration is the absence of dead branches or leaning trunks which might be blown down during the wind storm which precedes the afternoon rain.

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621 When they have hit upon a suitable spot, the women build the huts in a circle with the doorways facing in. There is no orientation, nor are any spots preferred. There are no special huts for unmarried boys or girls, or

361 621 widows; there are no ritual structures. There is simply one hut for each individual family. The relation of huts in the circle seems fortuitous, but it is dictated more than anything else by the friendship of women. Women are home most of the day; the men are out hunting. Women perform tasks that require no interaction, but they help each other for company. Friendship among the women generally takes the form of pairs, although subsidiary friendships may make larger groups. Hence the position of the huts, or rather the determination of who lives in which hut in what part of the circle, is determined purely on the intimacy of women in their daily work routines.

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621 361 Once they are in this camp they will stay on another three months or so until the game is scarce, the fruit gone, the camp ringed by high refuse heaps and pungent with the smell of rotting food and human refuse. Or they will perhaps move on a little earlier if someone dies and is buried there. They do not count time; they simply respond to the practical needs of the moment, the way lower organisms respond automatically to changes in intensity of light. Moreover, they will never go back to exactly the same place. One reason for this may be the presence of funeral remains; but there may be other reasons. The pygmies do not say why, and probably do not know.

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628 574 **Intercamp visits.**—For various reasons, individual pygmies and even whole families often visit neighboring camps. With exchange marriage it is necessary to know the people with whom an exchange is to be made. Thus, the need of finding wives makes it necessary to establish relationships between members of different camp units. Aside from marriage, other circumstances sometimes inspire these visits, as, for example, when an individual

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628 574 man, or even several men, may feel picked on, or in other words are unable to adjust themselves to the other members of the group in which they live. They will go on extensive visits to kinfolk in other bands, and some may never return. In this case they will [177] change their allegiance to new Negro hosts. Or they may have trouble with their Negroes and leave for this reason.

628 574 602 More frequently, however, a number of families will simply visit another camp, presumably because of the desire of women to spend some time with their parents, brothers, and other relatives. The camps are exogamous and the only chance a woman ordinarily has to see her own people is on such visits, during which the boys build up ties with their maternal uncles and [584] cousins. These visits, again, serve to establish relationships leading to marriage. Visits of this kind usually do not last more than two or three months, or the ordinary life of a camp site, but they serve to keep the pygmy world in a state or circulation, and to break up the monotony of the limited sets of relations possible among pygmies in a single camp and between pygmies and their specific Negroes.

595 582 **Marriage and divorce.**—The usual form of pygmy marriage is monogamy. One reason for this is the scarcity of women—many prefer to become second wives of Negroes and live in the ease of the village, thus avoiding the hardships of forest food gathering.

595 When a man does have two wives, one will live with him, while the other will live with her own kin, usually in a different camp, where he visits her on oc- [581] casion. Actually, the economic incentive to polygyny is absent, for whatever work the second wife performs benefits her own kinfolk only.

583 [582] Marriage takes place at or near puberty, and normally involves the technique of exchange. In its present-

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583 form, this means that a man must offer his sister for marriage to his intended wife's brother. However, since all families do not contain an even number of boys and girls, this principle may be extended to the larger family group, and a young man may offer a cousin, or an older man a niece, as his exchange partner.

586 Divorce is common and as informal as marriage. Usually it is the woman who makes the initial decision: she simply packs up her belongings and moves out. She will take her children with her and will be considered a member of her own parents' kinship group until she should remarry. This principle is also followed in the case of a widowed woman. A divorced woman's sons will remain with her until they are old enough to go hunting, when they will rejoin their father.

Although the original pair in an exchange marriage may have been drawn to each other by mutual affection, the same is not always the case with the exchange partners, whose union may not be of long duration. The really [583] unpleasant feature of exchange marriage is that if one union breaks up, the complementary marriage must also be dissolved; hence, if one couple cannot tolerate each other they will cause the separation of the other.

589 836 Because of the scarcity of women, a certain number of young men are forced to live out a painful bachelorhood for a number of years. Such bachelors usually, if not always, dally with girls whom they cannot marry because of kinship, or with other men's wives, and are a constant cause of trouble. However, if the family group of a boy's father fails to get him a wife, he may, in desperation, appeal to his mother's family group to provide one. If they do, he will go to live with his mother's people, although he is still technically a member of his father's

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group and a stranger in the camp, if it is a different one.

Pygmy Symbolism

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Food tabus.—The pygmy recognizes certain animals as symbols of definite relationships or identifications, in connection with which recognition he observes special food tabus.

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This principle is particularly involved in connection with the animals which represent the clan totems. Each clan has its own private totem animal, which is not, in most cases, actually considered an ancestor. Rather, it has acquired its position because, in the local mythology, an animal of the same species performed some special act of kindness which got one of the clan ancestors out of a perilous situation.

The animals which symbolize clans are always animals which are hunted by men; they are never slow-game animals, which women collect. Vegetable species are never used as totems. The totems are animals which may or may not be caught, about whose capture there is some element of chance, some possibility of crisis, and they are usually food animals, although leopards and chimpanzees, which are off the main dietary line, are totemic animals.

The pygmy will avoid eating the flesh of his own clan totem, but he can eat the flesh of totemic animals of any other clan. However, the pygmy recognizes seven species of antelope, and a dozen of small monkeys; and the clan totem will be, for instance, one species of antelope, rather than all antelopes. Therefore, these tabus do not cause anyone much discomfort, for no one species of these animals accounts for more than a small fraction of the total food supply, and each clan can eat six out of seven kinds of antelope, or eleven out of twelve kinds of monkeys.

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825 614 262 Not only does the pygmy avoid eating the flesh of his totemic animal, but he cannot even eat out of any dish or container in which any of its flesh has been cooked; moreover, he avoids the animal itself when he sees it in the forest, and may even flee from it. Carrying the principle of avoidance even further, a pygmy whose totem animal is the chimpanzee will not even eat the berries that are that animal's favorite food.

The breach of any of these tabus is supposed to bring on illness or death, while their observance is, of course, an automatic mechanism to intensify the mutual relations of the members of the clan, who may be scattered through the forest in different bands. As the clan members become more and more distant from each other, as their frequency of relations falls below a certain level, the tabus will break down and the scattered members will take over the prohibitions of the people among whom they live and with whom they have in time come to identify themselves.

794 834 Besides the clan food tabus, there are sex tabus, condition tabus, and personal tabus. The sex tabus serve to symbolize the difference in activities between men and women. Women and 262 children will eat frogs and toads, but men refuse to touch them. These amphibians probably symbolize water, and hence storms, and since it is the men who do the hunting they are the ones who are peculiarly vulnerable to storms.

784 262 [171] The condition tabus are the same type as those described by A. R. Brown in *The Andaman Islanders*. A pygmy going through the puberty period, pregnancy, mourning, or any other crisis in the life cycle will abstain from certain foods, and the animals concerned are thus symbols of this critical situation.

262 The personal tabus involve simply the refusal of an individual to eat certain

[P.338-A]

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Mbuti

262 foods. This may be due to a recognized allergy, to some unpleasant association, or to any one of a number of causes. The animals involved in these tabus include porcupines, snakes, and other slow game not found among the clan totems.

825 The animals of the forest, which symbolize clans, sexes, and individual and conditional idiosyncrasies, are very real people to the pygmies. In the old days, the mythical time, they could all talk and were on an even footing with men. Each species was symbolized by one individual, who was given an honorific name, as Mr. Turtle, Mr. Gray Antelope, or Mr. Chimpanzee. Mr. Turtle was a very wise and tricky individual, and the smallest antelope of all was King of the Beasts. The pygmies and their Negro hosts have an elaborate folklore about these animals and all their doings which might shed considerable light on their human relations.

821 **Ritual symbols.**—To the pygmies, water, rain, storm, thunder, lightning, snakes, and rainbows are all parts of a single symbolic configuration. The elements of this configuration, of course, represent the sudden rainstorms which arise without warning in the afternoons and sometimes, rarely, in the mornings as well. These may prevent hunting; flood huts; cause dead limbs to fall, crushing huts and killing people; or occasionally kill them by bolts of lightning. No other element in their life causes so much disturbance or upsets them so profoundly.

716 Both pygmies and Negroes believe in a *Nyama ya mai* (Swahili) or water animal, who lurks in streams and plays dangerous tricks on people. Sometimes he tips canoes over; sometimes he will grab the ankle of a woman fording a stream, so that she slips, and may even drown. If any serious mishap occurs in or in connection with the

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776 water, the people, will say, "It was the water animal that did it." Sometimes the water animal comes up out of his native element and assumes the form of a rainbow.

821 172 From time to time the Negroes and the pygmies find neolithic axes, which they say are "turds of lightning," excreta dropped in the process of the storm; when lightning splits a tree, one of these turds is always left.

776 The pygmies also believe in totemic spirits, which live in spirit places—in rock piles, hollow trees, and holes in the ground; classic *genii loci*. On their account, the pygmies refuse to go near certain rocky hills, on which there may be dense thickets. If a pygmy is out hunting with a white man, the white man may say, "Let us beat in there; there is game in that thicket." The pygmy will reply, "No Bwana, don't go in there; that hill is full of *sitana*." [192] The word *sitana* is the local Swahili or Kingwana equivalent for the Arabic word *shaitan*, plural *shayatin*.

Ritual Activities

789 821 **Weather magic.**—One class of weather ritual involves the use of physical symbols taken from the context of situation—leaves, which wave violently and are blown down in a storm. Schebesta[3] describes a simple ceremony of this kind in an Efe camp. During the height of a storm the oldest man in the camp came out of his house and stood in front of it. He brought with him leaves and ashes. First he threw most of the ashes upward into the wind, then he smeared ashes on a leaf, rubbed some onto his own body, and threw the rest into the wind.

Other methods mentioned by Schebesta are the burning of certain leaves,

[113] [3] Schebesta, P., *Among Congo Pygmies*. London: Hutchinson & Co., 1933. p. 243.

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789 821 especially those taken from a wild pepper plant, to stop storms; and the lighting of smoky fires in the forest, by the women in some camps, during the early or mid-day to keep the weather clear for hunting.[3] I have not witnessed these particular practices. My own experience with weather magic has been that on a number of occasions I was prevented from performing seemingly harmless actions. Once I started to pick a beautiful red hemanthus flower and was told, "Don't do that, master, or it will rain before we get back to camp." Again, I was about to drop a stone into a brook and was told the same thing. The pygmy attitude [811] seemed to involve a simple cause and effect relationship between the human action and the weather. All the magic which I personally observed is designed to avoid making it rain.

224 789 **Hunting magic.**—Hunting magic is usually a simple business. During the division of meat, the elder who is cutting it cuts a small piece off the heart and tosses it into the forest, before he gives the heart, the hunter's portion, to the hunter. In some regions hunters rub ashes obtained from burning a certain leaf around their eyes, to make them see the game better.[4] Another trick is to take the leaves of a certain species, on which a certain kind of animal feeds, and drape them on the hunter's bow; he may also burn them and rub the ashes on his body.

844 **Life cycle and rites of passage.**—There appears to be no ritual recognition of the birth of a child. If a woman is out on the trail, and feels her time arriving, she will stop and bear her child, then go on. If she is in camp, which is usually the case, other women 862 will help her. The women nurse their children a long while, well after they ∞∞ are able to walk and talk. There is a

[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 157.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 157.

[P.339-B]

855 597 There is a great deal of swapping children, fostering, and adoption. This takes place especially between sisters and between women who are friendly and work together. When a woman dies, her sister [768] will normally take over her children, keeping the girls until they are ready for marriage. The boys join their father when they are old enough to hunt.

881 Among the pygmies living in my immediate neighborhood, there is no separate pygmy initiation ceremony. Girls are not publicly initiated at all, and as mentioned above, the boys go through the Negro bush school with the sons of their patrons. (See Negro-pygmy relations; p. 325.)

585 A marriage within the camp creates no disturbance in the relations of the group as a whole, and little between the individuals in particular, but an intercamp marriage does produce crises in the lives of those close to the principals, as well as of the principals themselves, for such a marriage requires ceremony.

585 628 Schebesta[8] describes one of the latter, in which the two groups of kin, complete with brides but not with grooms, met in the forest away from either camp. They set up their huts near each other, but in separate bivouacs, and feasted and danced *separately* for three days. Then the two groups came together and the elder men of each group brought the two brides face to face and gave them advice—to keep the camp full of food, to be polite and friendly, to be particularly thoughtful of old people and children, to live in peace and bear many offspring. After this excellent advice, each girl was led by the kinfolk of her new husband to the camp in which she was to live, and there she joined her new husband. She brought along with her a few girls of her own group to ease the strain of so

[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 134–135.

585 628 many new faces, and no doubt this in itself laid the groundwork for future matchmaking. For a month or so after marriage she would work for and with the other women of the camp, and then set up housekeeping on her own.

Illness and Death

757 For most of his bodily ills the pygmy can find a local remedy. Gastric disorders and diarrhea plague them rather frequently. For these the universal cure is an enema (enemas are even used to produce abortions). Any pygmy, apparently, can give an enema to any other pygmy, but as a rule it is the women who give them to their husbands, children, and female friends. The instrument is a long reed with a gourd gummed on one end; the operator thrusts the other end into the patient's rectum and holds up the gourd end. The gourd is filled with various vegetable decoctions used in solution; these include the *tebvo* liana for diarrhea and *gorogoro* bark for stomach upsets.

755 179 When a pygmy is suffering from some mysterious ailment which he and his fellows are unable to cure and which seems to be magical in nature, he will go to the village of his Negro hosts and beg the local witch doctor to cure him by sucking out "disease objects," by cupping with horns, or by the use of herbs.

165 The greatest single cause of mortality in the pygmy community is falling from a tree. When a pygmy falls from such a height, he has no real chance of survival, for there are seldom branches below him. The second most frequent cause of death is falling branches. As the pygmy camp is always constructed in the primary forest itself, never in a clearing, a branch falling in a windstorm may hit a house, killing four or five people at once.

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165 After this come the various diseases
164 which kill the pygmies. Pneumonia and dysentery are the greatest killers; infection is rare. Far less important
136 than disease even is the action of hostile
165 animals—elephants, buffalo, or leopards. Once in a while an old leopard, too old to catch antelope, will dare run the risk of sneaking into a pygmy camp at night. The pygmy houses have no doors, and the leopard may slink into a house and grab a pygmy. At the noise so created, other pygmies will wake up and attack the leopard with spears or firebrands. Sometimes the leopard wins completely and carries off his victim's body, to munch at leisure. Sometimes he drops the mangled corpse, and at other times the pygmy may survive. I have seen one pygmy woman who had most of her face bitten away by a leopard and who
165 still lived. The pygmy resistance to
164 wound infections is incredibly great, although they will die like flies from pneumonia.

165 Another occasional cause of death is
372 burning. Pygmies are unusually restless during the sleeping hours of the night, and individuals get up frequently to relieve themselves. After doing so the pygmy seldom goes back to bed immediately. He usually sits in front of his hut for a while, in front of the fire.
[276] Here he will often light up his pipe and take a deep puff of tobacco, apparently to get the maximum effect of the nico-

165 tine in the least possible time. Some-
372 times this puff knocks him out; he
[276] faints, and falls forward into the fire. Very often there are others up about the same business, who, when they hear the thud, will run over and pull the victim out of the fire, in which case he will survive with bad burn scars. Sometimes, however, no one hears him, and the burns are fatal.

765 When a pygmy dies, his kinsmen
[764] bury him near the camp. They get
[273] bananas or wine ready-made from their Negroes, and a regular bout of wine drinking begins. The members of the deceased's family cover themselves with white pipe clay, and weep and wail for several days. This noisy manifestation of grief is intermittent, and formally controlled. Sometimes they even put it off for two or three days until all the relatives who have been away visiting at other camps can be gathered in. Most of it is done by women, who will weep and wail for a while in concert, then rest together, then weep together again for another spell. Anyone who is really overcome with emotion weeps quietly by him or herself, alone and without interruption.

768 After a few days of this the whole group will break camp and move on to some other site, unless there are strong objections to leaving. In any case, they never return to the grave, and never decorate or touch it.

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105 The foregoing selection is largely self-explanatory. The common notion that the pygmy of the forest leads a simple life is true only in a special sense. He has his band, his kinfolk elsewhere, his relationship with his hosts, his membership in an initiation grade. He has separate relationships with the members of his band, his clanmates outside, his hosts, and his classmates in the initiation school. Every pygmy is a specialist—at hunting—and some, the elephant hunters, are super-specialists. The key to all this is *trade* and an ethnic division of labor between pygmies and hosts.

000 One thing that struck me forcibly while I edited this material was the paucity of "religious" phenomena in pygmy culture. If you remember that ritual is al-

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000 ways associated with *crises* and *change*, you will see that the reason is to be found in the lack of annual variation in the climate, and the paucity of critical situations. A thunderstorm, accidents in the water, and the excitement of an elephant hunt all have their rituals. Physically the African pygmies described by Putnam are much like the Andamanese, and many culture historians have speculated about their cultural similarities. What can you see that the two peoples had in common which might not be explained away by the similarity of environment alone?

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